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772 333 Giorgi Mtatzmindeli ("of Holy Mount"), who, in addition to his numerous writings, had no little influence on the relations of Byzantium and Georgia.

792 177 As so often happens in life, the incidental doings of these holy men were far more important than their lives' works in copying and dogmatizing. The Georgian monasteries abroad became universities for the youth of Georgia, and in their travels they absorbed the knowledge of the Classic philosophers who had passing fashions in Byzantium, and they learnt the ways and the practical achievements of the great Mediterranean world. By contrary, the renown of the Georgian monasteries in the orthodox Byzantine Empire impressed the rulers of the West with the signal virtues of the Georgian nation, and the imposing theologians from Athos visited the capital as the diplomatic and, not infrequently, the matrimonial agents of the Georgian kings. Again, the returning studious youth, and the divines who came back to Georgia to forage among the wealthy and uneasy-minded, carried with them admiration for and desire to emulate the magnificent intellectual organization of the Byzantine Church. In Georgia the monastic system had been developing from early times. Grigol Khandzteli, in the ninth century, had founded a group of monasteries along the Chorokhi, and the excellent educational system which he introduced at Khandzti, Shatberdi and Tbeti was copied and encouraged by the Georgian kings, to the extent that in the eleventh century universities were in being at Gelati in Imereti, and at Alaverdi and Gremi in Kakheti.

538 776 The vast literary output of the monks, in Georgia and abroad, is of little interest except to the specialist and to the student of illumination and book-making. It is only the "Lives" of Georgian Saints which have a certain historical interest and their own originality, in that the subject-matter is new. These "Lives" include those of Prince Murvano (St. Peter of Iberia); St. Nino, the Illuminator of Georgia; Saints Ioanné and Evthimé; St. Grigol Khandtzeli; St. Abo; and St. Giorgi Mtatzmindeli. Of these, the *Life of St. Abo*, who lived in the eighth century, is by far the most entertaining. St. Abo was originally a perfumer's boy in Baghdad. He met with Nersé, the son of Adarnasé Kuropalatês of Kartli, who was held prisoner in Baghdad, and accompanying the prince back to Georgia, was converted to the Christian faith. Later Nersé was involved in war with the Arabs, and accompanied by Abo, fled to Osseti and then into the land of the Khazars. After many adventures, they found their way to